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Title: Need to implement the recommendations of Majithia Wage Board.

SHRI B. VINOD KUMAR (KARIMNAGAR): Journalists are the core of the Press. A strong and independent Press is part of the system of checks and balances as the 'fourth estate' and is vital to a democracy. Unfortunately journalists who are ultimately workers like anyone else, are often paid meagre amounts. The Supreme Court in 2014 ruled that the recommendations of the six wage boards set up since 1955 under the Working Journalists and Other Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act were valid. The Majithia wage board recommended various important social-security measures which went beyond the mandated revision of the wage structure. These included post-retirement benefits, a forward-looking promotion policy, paternity leave for male employees, a retirement age of 65 years, a pension scheme, allowances for night-shifts, hardship, transport and house rent, a tribunal to adjudicate on complaints regarding non-implementation or circumvention of the wage board's awards and equal salary for contractual workers and regular employees where the same work is performed. The wage board also announced an "interim relief" of 30 percent of basic pay for employees, with effect from January 2008, and recommended an overall increase in salaries, with a provision for payment of arrears.

The Supreme Court ordered that the revised wages would be payable from 11 November 2011. However, this has received resistance from the newspaper establishment owners and is not being implemented properly. I request the government to implement the recommendations at the earliest.